

BOOK REVIEWS

DISEASES OF THE ADRENALS. By Louis J. Soffer, M.D., Adjunct Attending Physician, The Mount Sinai Hospital, New York City. Cloth. Pp. 304, illustrated with 42 engravings and 2 colored plates. Philadelphia: Lea & Febiger, 1946.

As is so frequently noted in recent days, the science of endocrinology is growing up. No longer are monographs on this subject composed largely of bizarre photographs and equally bizarre clinical guesswork. Modern endocrinology speaks in terms of fundamental physiology and deals with an ever increasing number of specific chemical entities of known structure and function.

This little book by Dr. Soffer on *Diseases of the Adrenals* is a good example of the modern approach. While in clinical practice specific adrenal disease is relatively rare, it behooves every practitioner, internist and surgeon to have a working knowledge of adrenal function, especially those functions relating to the electrolytes, specifically sodium and potassium; to carbohydrate and protein metabolism; and to sexual development and function.

The chapters on physiology are clear and concise. Existing lacks in knowledge are frankly stated and there is a refreshing lack of speculative dogmatism.

The clinical discussions of Addison's disease, the adreno-genital syndrome, and the various adrenal tumors are excellent and not too long. They are well illustrated with selected case histories. The latter are condensed to their essentials. The clinical manifestations are well correlated with known physiology, and the sections on specific therapy are definite and inclusive.

The style is simple and easy to read.

The bibliography is most comprehensive, the section on physiology alone citing 219 references.

The reviewer enjoyed this book and recommends it for general as well as more specific reading.

DISEASES OF THE RETINA. By Herman Elwyn, M.D., Senior Assistant Surgeon, New York Eye and Ear Infirmary. Cloth. Price, \$10.00. Pp. 587 with 170 illustrations, 19 in color. Philadelphia: The Blakiston Company, 1946.

The author has divided the subject matter into eight parts and forty-two chapters. The first two parts include 17 chapters dealing with diseases of the retina resulting from disturbances in circulation and from vascular malformations. This is covered in a way which makes interesting reading, and it is well illustrated with fundus photographs and reproductions of many pathologic sections. An attempt is made in these chapters to correlate the fundus picture with the underlying systemic vascular disease or anomaly so that it makes a handy reference volume for both the ophthalmologist and internist. Arteriosclerosis, both general and local, in the eye-grounds, essential hypertension and arteriospastic retinitis in kidney diseases, is taken up in considerable detail. The paragraphs on pathologic anatomy and pathogenesis in each chapter are short and to the point.

In the chapter on diabetic retinitis, an interesting comparison is drawn between diabetes, essential hypertension and chronic simple glaucoma. It appears to be the author's belief that in all these diseases the mechanisms for control of normal values of blood sugar, blood pressure and intra-ocular pressure, respectively, are inherently deficient. He attributes this inherent instability to an in-

herited defect present in the germ plasm and says that it appears at a definite early period in life. He states that in the case of diabetes, the cause of the instability is not to be found in the effector organs such as the liver, in the islands of Langerhans or in the peripheral vegetative nervous system. He stresses the central nervous system of brain as the regulating mechanism.

The remaining chapters include many of the rarer diseases of the retina of the degenerative type, such as retinitis pigmentosa, heredo-degeneration of the macula, amaurotic family idiocy, etc.

Inflammatory disease of the retina discussed include tuberculosis and syphilis. There is a short chapter each on retinal changes in septicemia and in subacute bacterial endocarditis. Only one case was reported to prove that tuberculosis of the retina could exist in pure form.

In the section under tumors of the retina, glioma or retinoblastoma is discussed extensively. The technique of radiation therapy as outlined by Martin and Reese is given under the paragraph for treatment. The rarity of other primary tumors of the retina is emphasized. He states that there are only three reports in the literature, one of a perithelioma of the retinal vessels, one of endothelioma of the nerve head, and one of sarcoma of the retina.

Approximately sixty pages are given to a discussion of the diseases leading to retinal detachment and to the etiology clinical picture, pathologic anatomy and treatment of the condition. For the benefit of the few medical men and possibly the rare ophthalmologist inclined to write off one eye with retinal detachment without attempting surgery, figures are given on bilaterality of the condition. The figure approaches 18 per cent in one large series.

ANESTHESIA IN GENERAL PRACTICE. By S. C. Cullen, M.D., Head of Division of Anesthesiology, Department of Surgery, State University of Iowa's Hospitals; Associate Professor of Surgery (Anesthesiology), State University of Iowa's College of Medicine. The Year Book Publishers, Inc., Chicago. Price, \$3.50.

The chapters of this book on Preanesthetic Medication; Airway Inhalation Anesthesia Agents and Techniques; Signs of Anesthesia; Choice of Anesthetic Agent and Technique; Recognition and Treatment of Shock; Oxygen Therapy; Pre and Postoperative Care of the Patient and Explosion Hazards are presented in a clear, concise manner. They should be of value to beginners in anesthesia and to those doing anesthesia on a part-time basis.

The chapters on Spinal Analgesia and Regional are not on a par with the remainder of the book and contain statements such as: "The selection of a drug for spinal analgesia can be made solely on a time basis. Toxic properties of these drugs need not be considered because toxic reactions do not occur following the introduction of these drugs intrathecally." Such statements interpreted literally by a novice could easily lead to a fatality from administration of too large a dose of a toxic anesthetic agent.

The description and illustrations of the correct treatment of reactions to local anesthetic agents are well done.

On the whole the book is well written and contains much of value.